



Department of Recreation and Parks
Annual Report Fiscal Year 2010
(July 2009-June 2010)

Improving Life in the Community



City of Rockville



Recreation and Parks Annual Report FY 2010

Improving Life in the Community



Message from the Director

The City of Rockville's Department of Recreation and Parks is proud of the work we do every day to deliver essential leisure-time health, supportive and maintenance services to the Rockville community. This annual report, our first, is a requirement of the updated Parks, Recreation and Open Space (PROS) Plan. It provides a brief overview of our activities and accomplishments during the past fiscal year. Whether you have lived in Rockville your entire life or are a visitor from out of town, I think you will be impressed by the many ways we serve residents and visitors alike.

With programs and services ranging from after school care to fitness classes to the upkeep of public bike paths, we contribute to Rockville's exceptional quality of life in real and tangible ways. The beautiful parks and clean and friendly community centers we operate and maintain provide gathering places for residents and help make neighborhoods feel like home. Educational and recreational programs for everyone from babies to seniors promote a healthy and active community and address the need to reduce childhood obesity and other chronic health issues.

Each home in Rockville is located within a short walk of a City park, and the City is home to more than 1,000 acres of parkland, composed of 33 passive and 32 active parks. With community centers, a nature center, civic center, swim and fitness center, golf course and senior center, and a full range of outdoor recreation amenities, we are committed to offering a variety of recreational opportunities for all residents.

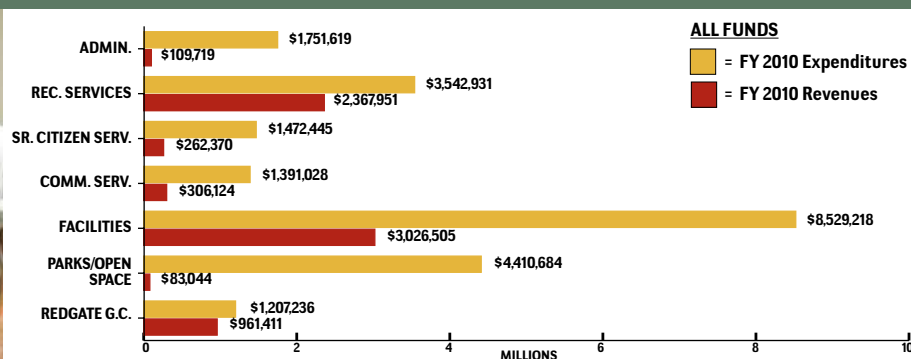
Given the economy of the past few years, fiscally responsible management has become even more central to the work we do. Last year's budget tightening led to efficiency improvements in programming and service delivery and more strategic targeting of our resources. This has helped us to better meet the needs of the community, while saving taxpayers' money.

We look forward to continuing to serve the community, and hope to see you in one of our fun and healthy recreation classes or at one of our excellent parks or facilities.

Burt Hall Director, Recreation and Parks Department

2010 in Review Highlights

- 10,994 people participated in programs, classes and camps.
- 65 City parks were maintained.
- The department received several awards, including designation as a USA Swimming "Gold Medal Club" for the Rockville Montgomery Swim Club team, a Tree City USA Award, an International Society of Arboriculture Award for College Gardens Park, and two Peerless Rockville Historic Preservation Awards for Falls Grove and College Gardens Parks.



Enriching Life in the Community

During the past year more than **10,994 people** participated in recreation programs, there were **490,611 visits** to a City community center or the Swim and Fitness Center and untold numbers of residents enjoyed their local parks. Seven of the 10 planned public artworks have been installed in Town Square, bringing the total City **public artworks to 43**. Approximately **36,664 visitors** viewed a show at the F. Scott Fitzgerald Theatre.

Responding in a Time of Crisis

Major **winter storms** (on Dec. 21, Feb. 5 and Feb. 12) dropped an unprecedented 68 inches of snow on Rockville and created power outages and tree damage while blocking roads, sidewalks and parking lots.

The Department of Recreation and Parks responded to these challenges by clearing **30 miles** of sidewalks and paths, **19 City facility parking lots** and almost **200 downed trees**.

Planning for the Future

After more than three years of research, community meetings, focus groups, a scientifically-conducted community survey, extensive involvement of our boards and commissions, and work with a consultant, the Mayor and Council adopted the updated **Parks, Recreation and Open Space (PROS) Plan**. The plan sets the following, major community-wide



- Acquire additional park and open space land.
- Continue to build and develop Rockville as a cultural destination.
- Strengthen connectivity between neighborhoods, parks and facilities.
- Balance programmed and un-programmed activities and areas. Focus more strongly on nature-based activities, play and wellness.
- Reinvent, reinvest and rebuild existing parks, recreation and open space. Share facilities.
- Market the program.
- Embrace cultural diversity. Maximize opportunities for ethnic groups to participate in Rockville's parks, facilities and programs.

"Rockville's outstanding recreation programs and parks touch everyone in our community."

— KATE SAVAGE,
RECREATION AND
PARKS ADVISORY
BOARD CHAIR

goals for the next 20 years:

- Build community pride and ownership in the City's recreation and parks system.
- Support sustainability initiatives.



Mission Statement

The Department of Recreation and Parks promotes participation for all Rockville citizens in diverse, interesting, and high quality recreational and leisure opportunities in safe, modern, and well-maintained parks and facilities.

Community Impact



Helping Families

The Latino Boys Soccer Program, administered by the department's Community Services Division, is designed to support at-risk youth through engagement with positive role models, after school sports, in school support and volunteer activities. Last year, **55 participants** enrolled in the program through two area high schools and one middle school. All of the partici-

pants stayed in school, graduating to the next grade.

Through Linkages to Learning at Maryvale Elementary School, the City provides essential services to underserved families in a holistic framework. The program supports **77 families with 178 students** through case management, in-school counseling and support, housing assistance, parent education and food.

Supporting a Healthy Economy

Rockville's events such as Hometown Holidays, Uncorked Wine and Music Festival, the Rotary Twilight Runfest and weekly farmers markets bring visitors to the city and make it easy for residents to support local shops, restaurants and farmers.

According to an Americans for the Arts Economic Impact Study (2009) local events gener-

ate **\$27.79 per person** for the local economy. With **86 events** and more than **160,600 total attendees**; approximately **\$4.4 million** was generated for the local economy last year.

Events also provide an opportunity for local non-profits to raise needed funds and awareness for their organizations. Last year, **201 nonprofit organizations** participated in City events and raised more than **\$71,000** to support their activities and services.

Promoting Arts and Culture

The Department of Recreation and Parks supports a vibrant visual, musical and performing arts community in Rockville. Residents and

The department also hosted **10 entertainment stages** during Hometown Holidays and **10 musical acts** during the Uncorked Wine and Music Festival and partnered with local businesses to host **16 free weekly concerts** in Town Square during the summer.

The Finest! Youth Performance Troupe also performs at free community events throughout the year. The troupe is a multicultural group of actors, dancers and stepers focused on providing healthy, productive and alternative ways for youth to spend their non-school hours. During the past year, **114 residents** between the ages of 6 and 18 performed **32 times** in the community.

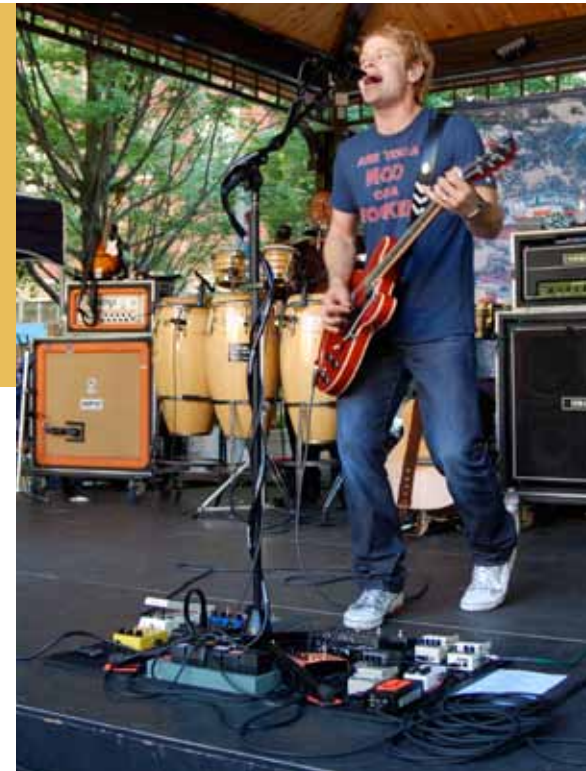


Highlights

- **2,751 residents** received counseling, housing and educational services from the City.
- **546 kids** received backpacks and school supplies at the annual Back to School Jam.
- **\$26,300** in scholarships was given to youth to participate in programs/activities.
- In addition to career staff, **550 people** are employed on a part-time or temporary basis. An additional **165**, mostly youth, are hired during the summer.
- **106 community neighborhood and Parent Teacher Association events** were supported.



"The three major City events, **Hometown Holidays, Uncorked** and the **Twilight Runfest** were in the top five of my sales days during this past year."
– LI YAU, GORDON BIRSCH GENERAL MANAGER



Wellness



Improving Community Wellness

The Centers for Disease Control reports that seven out of 10 deaths of Americans each year are from chronic, preventable, diseases such as heart disease, cancer and stroke. The Department of Recreation and Parks offers myriad affordable programs, classes, events and sports activities for youth and adults that promote physical

fitness and health, proper nutrition and active lifestyles.

As examples, during Fiscal Year 2010 there were **314 sports teams** participating in leagues, **344 swimmers** participated in the Rockville Montgomery Swim Club and **1,692 teens** participated in recreation programs. Drop-in use is encouraged at **65 public parks, 53 playgrounds, 1,034 acres of parkland** and **five fitness centers**.

Developing Healthy Habits in Youth

The Department of Recreation and Parks is committed to combating rising childhood obesity rates through the encouragement of healthy lifestyle habits in youth.

The City's after-school programs for elementary students include one hour of physical activity each day and serve nutritious snacks for **more than 200 students**. After school pro-

grams for middle and high school students include nutrition education and instruction on how to prepare healthy snacks.

During the past year more than **1,144 young children and toddlers** registered for a class; **4,286 played** on a youth sports team; **2,184 registered** for summer camp; and **2,500 participated** in Safe Routes to School, a bicycle and pedestrian safety program.

Supporting Older Adults

Seniors are the fastest growing segment of the population in Rockville, and the Department of Recreation and Parks has increased the number of programs available for old-

er adults in response.

The Rockville Senior Center had **1,212 members** in Fiscal Year 2010. More than **381 seniors** used aging in place services, helping them stay in their homes, and approximately **17,646 nutritious, reduced priced meals** were served.



Highlights

- 27,678 registrants participated in recreation programs.
- 1,768 registrants participated in adult Swim and Fitness Center classes; 1,860 registrants participated in child Swim and Fitness Center classes.
- 9,491 runners participated in four City-sponsored or -supported road races: Pike's Peek, Rotary Twilight Runfest, Halloween Young Run and Rockville 10K/5K.
- 33,479 rounds of golf were played at RedGate Golf Course.



"Fabulous, positive, supportive and informative instructors. Shared extensive knowledge through their research and experience. Would **absolutely recommend** to others."

– LISA AND JULIE,
RUNNING FURTHER FASTER CLASS PARTICIPANTS



"I've been attending aquatic classes at the **Rockville Swim and Fitness Center** since 1983. Without all the exercise I would have had a very hard time recovering from a recent fall and walking again"

– SUE, CLASS PARTICIPANT



Stewards of the Natural and Physical Environment



Protecting the Environment

For more than **20 years** Rockville has been designated a Tree City USA by the Arbor Day Foundation and the department's Forestry Division intends to keep it that way. The City's Forest and Tree Preservation Ordinance places particular emphasis on saving mature stands of trees, and is considered a model in the state.

Through regular en-

ergy audits of City facilities, and the incorporation of green technologies where possible, the department helps to protect the environment and save taxpayer dollars at the same time. For example, the Thomas Farm Community Center, completed in 2008, relies on geothermal heating and cooling as an alternative to fossil fuels. Total energy costs for the center last year were **\$20,000 less than** the energy costs for the Twinbrook

Community Recreation Center, a facility that is 5,000 square feet smaller.

Educating Youth

The Croydon Creek Nature Center partners with the Montgomery County Public Schools (MCPS) to encourage youth to learn about and practice the protection of natural resources. The center offers programs that were created to complement MCPS curriculum for elementary

students, and more than **2,530 students** participated last year.

Of the teachers who bring their classes to the center, **82 percent** indicate that their students learned to respect the natural world as a result of the program. Additionally, **98 percent** indicate that the program is high quality and aligned with the school curriculum.

Maintaining Public Infrastructure

In Fiscal Year 2010 **six City parks** were completed or improved. The new Falls Grove Park was completed; College Gardens Park was recon-

structed, earning the City awards for environmental excellence for its landscaping and storm water management features; Maryvale Park was improved; football fields at Mattie J.T. Stepanek

Tree Canopy Map Highlights Shade Density

The tree canopy map (at left) illustrates the amount of tree canopy cover throughout the City. Denser tree coverage improves water quality, saves energy, lowers City temperatures, reduces pollution and enhances property values, according to a report on Rockville's tree canopy by the University of Vermont's Spatial Analysis Laboratory.



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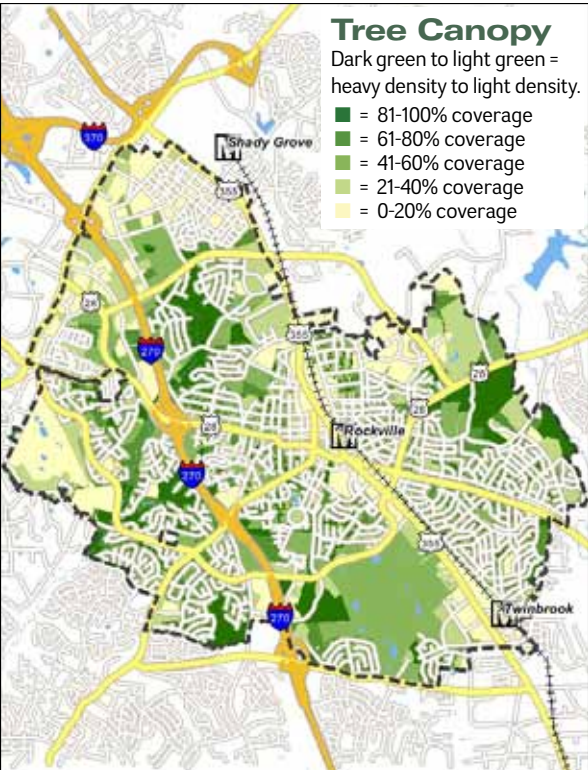
Highlights

- 65 parks, composed of 1,034 acres, were maintained at high standards, ensuring access to quality outdoor environments for residents in all city neighborhoods.
- More than 11,000 park and facilities work orders were completed during the fiscal year.
- 3,210 square yards of basketball and tennis courts were repaired, color coated or resurfaced.
- 30.7 miles of bike paths were maintained, improved or created.
- More than 2,100 street trees were pruned to improve lighting and public safety.



"The **Croydon Creek Nature Center programs** and **staff** have nurtured and expanded my daughter's knowledge and enthusiasm while helping her learn how to take care of her environment."

— ROCKVILLE PARENT



Partnerships and Volunteers



Supporting Youth in Need

The Recreation Fund, which provides scholarships to youth whose families require financial assistance with recreation program fees, distributed **\$26,300** last year.

The Rockville Recreation and Parks Foundation, Inc. provided scholarships for **35 children** to participate in **50 activities** provided by the department.

In addition, **142 youth** participated in informal group counseling and **99**

parents completed parenting classes for low-income families.

Offering Teens Volunteer Opportunities

The Leaders in Training (LIT) program places teens in junior camp counselor positions with the City's summer programs. Last year, **225 teens** participated. Providing them with important on-the-job training and real world experience. In addition, hundreds of teens earned MCPS

Student Service Learning credits by volunteering.

New in Fiscal Year 2010, the R World program, for youth in grades 6 to 12, encourages teens to develop and implement environmental community initiatives and projects. In the program's first year **12 students** joined and **six projects** were completed.

Engaging the Community

The Department of Recreation and Parks works with a variety of boards, commissions and

standing committees composed of volunteer community members. Partnering boards, commissions and committees include:

- Cultural Arts Commission*
- F. Scott Fitzgerald Theatre User Group Committee
- Glenview Mansion subcommittee
- Human Services Advisory Commission*
- Recreation and Park Advisory Board*
- RedGate Advisory Group
- Rockville Bike Advisory Committee*
- Rockville Dog Owners Group (RDOG)
- Rockville Swim and Fitness Center Advisory Group
- Rockville Youth Commission*

- Senior Citizens Commission
 - White Tailed Deer Task Force
- * Reporting to the Mayor and Council in an official capacity.

Community Partners:

Our community partners allow us to leverage our resources and reach more residents with im-



- Federal Realty Investment Trust
- Housing Initiative Partnership (HIP)
- Interages
- Montgomery Coalition for Adult English Literacy
- Montgomery College, Rockville Campus
- Montgomery County Road Runners Club
- RMSC Swim Team Parents Club, Inc.
- Rockville Art League
- Rockville Baseball Association
- Rockville Chamber of Commerce
- Rockville Economic Development, Inc. (REDI)
- Rockville Elks Lodge
- Rockville Football League
- Rockville Little Theatre
- Rockville Musical Theatre
- Rockville Rays Parents Association
- Rockville Recreation and Parks Foundation, Inc.
- Rockville Rotary Club
- Rockville Seniors Inc.
- Rockville Sister City Corp.
- Rockville Volunteer Fire Department
- Shady Grove Adventist Hospital
- Suburban Hospital
- Victorian Lyric Opera Company
- VisArts at Rockville

Highlights

- Community partners donated more than \$115,000 to support facilities, programs, parks, participant scholarships and equipment purchases.
- The Rockville Holiday Drive distributed toys and gift certificates to 548 families with 1,138 children thanks to the community's generosity.
- 1,423 volunteers donated 102,595 hours to support programs. Valued at \$20 per hour by Independent Sector, a coalition of charitable organizations, volunteers contributed more than \$2 million in time to the community.
- 24 nonprofit community service agencies received funding from the City.



"My family and I have been participating in Rockville's recreation programs and we are **deeply appreciative** and **grateful** for the foundation's assistance."

— PARENT OF A ROCKVILLE RECREATION AND PARKS FOUNDATION, INC. SCHOLARSHIP AWARD RECIPIENT



portant programs and services.

- American Legion Post 86
- Antique and Classic Car Show Committee
- Bikes of the World
- Cancer Project
- Commonwealth Foundation
- Community Action Agency
- EU Services
- F. Scott Fitzgerald Literary Conference, Inc.





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